

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-22 (canceled).

Claim 23 (currently amended): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game including a plurality of reels, each of the reels defining a plurality of locations for a plurality of symbols, the reels displaying a plurality of different combinations of the symbols after the reels are spun at least one time, the different combinations being positioned along a plurality of different pay lines;

a plurality of winning conditions associated with a plurality of the combinations;

an award associated with each one of the winning conditions;

at least one wild function which is: (a) operable on a first one or more of the symbols in a first one of the combinations, the first one or more symbols being positioned along a first one of the pay lines; (b) inoperable on one or more of the symbols in a second one of the combinations, said one or more symbols being positioned along a second one of the pay lines, the first combination being different from the second combination; and (c) operable to increase a likelihood of meeting at least one of the winning conditions;

a triggering event that occurs when a designated one or more of the symbols is displayed during the game; and

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) determine if the triggering event occurs;

(b) cause the display device to visually distinguish a plurality of the locations of the reels from a plurality of the other locations of the reels;

(c) cause each of the first symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the wild function;

(d) determine if any of the winning conditions are present, taking the wild function of said symbols into account; and

(e) provide the player with the awards associated with any of the winning conditions that are present.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 23, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) cause a plurality of first symbols to have the wild function; and (b) cause each of the first symbols to be displayed one at a time.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 23, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to simultaneously cause each of the first symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the wild function.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 25, wherein each of the first symbols displayed at the visually distinguished locations has an image, the gaming device including at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause the display device to simultaneously replace said images with designated images associated with the wild function.

Claim 27 (currently amended): The gaming device of Claim 23, wherein each one of the pay lines includes a pay line selected from the group consisting of a horizontal pay line, a row pay line, a column pay line and a diagonal pay line. ~~-(a) the first combination of symbols is associated with a first pay line; and (b) the second combination of symbols is associated with a second pay line.~~

Claim 28 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 23, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction

being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 29 (currently amended): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game having a plurality of reels, each of the reels displaying a plurality of symbols of different types, the symbols being groupable to form a first group of symbols and a second group of symbols which is different from the first group of symbols, the first and second groups of symbols being positioned along a plurality of different pay lines; and

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) cause the first and second groups of symbols to be displayed after the reels stop spinning;

(b) after a designated event occurs, apply a wild function to at least a first one of the symbols in the first group, the first symbol being positioned on a first one of the pay lines, wherein the wild function is:

(i) operable on at least one of the other symbols of a different type than the first symbol, the other symbol being within the first or second group, and

(ii) inoperable on one or more of the symbols in the second group, said one or more symbols being positioned along a second one of the pay lines, and

(c) determine whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the wild function applied to the first symbol.

Claim 30 (currently amended): The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein each one of the pay lines includes a pay line selected from the group consisting of a horizontal pay line, a row pay line, a column pay line and a diagonal pay line. ~~∴ (a) the first group of symbols is associated with a first pay line; and (b) the second group of symbols is associated with a second pay line.~~

Claim 31 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 29, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) cause a plurality of the symbols to have the wild function; and (b) cause each of said symbols to be displayed one at a time.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 29, which has a data storage device storing at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause each of the symbols with the wild function to be visually distinguished from the symbols which do not have the wild function.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 33, wherein each of the visually distinguished symbols has an image, the data storage device having at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause the images to be simultaneously replaced with designated images associated with the wild function.

Claim 35 (currently amended): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game having a plurality of reels, each of the reels displaying a plurality of symbols, each of the symbols having at least one characteristic, a plurality of the characteristics being different from one another, and the symbols being combinable to form a first combination of symbols and a second combination of symbols, the first combination being different from the second combination, the first and second combinations being positioned along a plurality of different pay lines; and

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) cause the first and second combinations of symbols to be displayed after the reels stop spinning;

(b) after a designated event occurs, assign at least one of the characteristics to at least one of the symbols in the first combination, said symbol being positioned on a first one of the pay lines, wherein the assigned characteristic:

(i) is different from the characteristic of said symbol,
(ii) includes the characteristic of at least one of the other symbols, and
(iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination, said one or more symbols being positioned along a second one of the pay lines, and

(c) determine whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the characteristic assigned to said symbol.

Claim 36 (currently amended): The gaming device of Claim 35, wherein each one of the pay lines includes a pay line selected from the group consisting of a horizontal pay line, a row pay line, a column pay line and a diagonal pay line. ~~;(a) the first combination of symbols is associated with a first pay line; and (b) the second combination of symbols is associated with a second pay line.~~

Claim 37 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 35, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 35, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to, after the designated event occurs, assign a plurality of the characteristics to a plurality of selected symbols in the first combination or second combination, wherein each one of the assigned characteristics:

- (i) is different from the characteristic of the selected symbol to which said characteristic is being assigned,
- (ii) includes the characteristic of at least one symbol other than said selected symbol,
- (iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the first combination if said selected symbol is in the second combination, and
- (iv) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination if said selected symbol is in first combination.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 38, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause an image associated with each one of assigned characteristics to be displayed simultaneously or one at a time.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The gaming device of Claim 38, which has a data storage device storing at least one instruction executable by the processor to cause each one of the selected symbols to be visually distinguished from the other symbols.

Claim 41 (currently amended): A method for operating a gaming device, the method comprising:

- (a) receiving at least one input from a player;
- (b) spinning a plurality of reels wherein each of the reels displays a plurality of symbols of different types, and the symbols are groupable to form a first group of symbols and a second group of symbols, the first group being different from the second group;
- (c) displaying the first and second groups of symbols after the reels stop spinning, wherein the first and second groups of symbols are positioned along a plurality of different pay lines;
- (d) after a designated event occurs, applying a wild function to at least a first one of the symbols in the first group, the first symbol being positioned on a first one of the pay lines, wherein the wild function is:
 - (i) operable on at least one of the other symbols of a different type than the first symbol, the other symbol being within the first or second group, and
 - (ii) inoperable on one or more of the symbols in the second group, said one or more symbols being positioned along a second one of the pay lines; and
- (e) determining whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the wild function applied to the first symbol.

Claim 42 (currently amended): The method of Claim 41, wherein each one of the pay lines includes a pay line selected from the group consisting of a horizontal pay line, a row pay line, a column pay line and a diagonal pay line. which includes: (a) associating a first pay line with the first group of symbols; and (b) associating a second pay line with the second group of symbols.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The method of Claim 41, which includes storing at least one instruction which is executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the symbols.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The method of Claim 41, which includes: (a) causing a plurality of the symbols to have the wild function; and (b) causing each of said symbols to be displayed simultaneously or one at a time.

Claim 45 (currently amended): A method for operating a gaming device, the method comprising:

- (a) receiving at least one input from a player;
- (b) spinning a plurality of reels wherein:
 - (i) each of the symbols has at least one characteristic,
 - (ii) a plurality of the characteristics are different from one another, and
 - (iii) the symbols of the reels are combinable to form a first combination of symbols and a second combination of symbols, the first combination being different from the second combination;
- (c) displaying the first and second combinations of symbols after the reels stop spinning, wherein the first and second combinations of symbols are positioned along a plurality of different pay lines;
- (d) after a designated event occurs, assigning at least one of the characteristics to at least one of the symbols in the first combination, said symbol being positioned on a first one of the pay lines, wherein the assigned characteristic:
 - (i) is different from the characteristic of said symbol,
 - (ii) includes the characteristic of at least one of the other symbols, and
 - (iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination, said one or more symbols being positioned along a second one of the pay lines; and
- (e) determining whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the characteristic assigned to said symbol.

Claim 46 (currently amended): The method of Claim 45, wherein each one of the pay lines includes a pay line selected from the group consisting of a horizontal pay line, a row pay line, a column pay line and a diagonal pay line. ~~which includes: (a) associating a first pay line with the first combination of symbols; and (b) associating a second pay line with the second combination of symbols.~~

Claim 47 (previously presented): The method of Claim 45, which includes storing at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the symbols.

Claim 48 (previously presented): The method of Claim 45, which includes, after the designated event occurs, assigning a plurality of the characteristics to a plurality of selected symbols in the first combination or second combination, wherein each one of the assigned characteristics:

- (i) is different from the characteristic of the selected symbol to which said characteristic is being assigned,
- (ii) includes the characteristic of at least one symbol other than said selected symbol,
- (iii) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the first combination if said selected symbol is in the second combination, and
- (iv) excludes the characteristic of one or more of the symbols in the second combination if said selected symbol is in first combination.

Claim 49 (previously presented): The method of Claim 48, which includes causing an image associated with each one of assigned characteristics to be displayed simultaneously or one at a time.

Claim 50 (new): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game including a plurality of reels, each one of the reels defining a plurality of locations for a plurality of symbols, the symbols being combinable to form a plurality of combinations of the symbols, each one of the combinations having a non-linear configuration;

at least one winning condition associated with at least one of the combinations;

an award associated with the winning condition;

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) cause one of the combinations of symbols to be displayed after the reels are spun;

(b) after a designated event occurs, cause the display device to visually distinguish a plurality of the locations of the reels from a plurality of the other locations of the reels;

(c) cause each of the symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have a wild function, the wild function being:

(i) operable on a first one or more of the symbols in the displayed combination,

(ii) inoperable on one or more of the other symbols, and

(iii) operable to increase a likelihood of meeting the winning condition; and

(d) determine whether the winning condition is present, taking the wild function of said symbols into account; and

(e) provide the player with the award associated with any winning condition that is present.

Claim 51 (new): The gaming device of Claim 50, wherein the non-linear configuration includes a configuration selected from the group consisting of a non-linear pay line, a scatter pay combination and a positional scatter arrangement.

Claim 52 (new): The gaming device of Claim 50, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) cause a plurality of first symbols to have the wild function; and (b) cause each of the first symbols to be displayed one at a time.

Claim 53 (new): The gaming device of Claim 50, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to simultaneously cause each of the first symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the wild function.

Claim 54 (new): A gaming device comprising:

a game operable upon a wager, the game having a plurality of reels, each of the reels displaying a plurality of symbols, each of the symbols having at least one characteristic, a plurality of the characteristics being different from one another, and the symbols being combinable to form a plurality of combinations of symbols, each one of the combinations having a non-linear configuration; and

a processor in control of a display device, the processor operable to:

(a) cause one of the combinations of symbols to be displayed after the reels stop spinning;

(b) after a designated event occurs, assign at least one of the characteristics to at least a first one of the symbols in the displayed combination, wherein the assigned characteristic:

(i) is different from the characteristic of the first symbol,

(ii) is identical to the characteristic of at least a second one of the symbols, and

(iii) excludes the characteristic of at least a third one of the symbols;

and

(c) determine whether a winning condition is present based, at least in part, on the characteristic assigned to the first symbol.

Claim 55 (new): The gaming device of Claim 54, wherein the non-linear configuration includes a configuration selected from the group consisting of a non-linear pay line, a scatter pay combination and a positional scatter arrangement.

Claim 56 (new): The gaming device of Claim 54, which includes at least one instruction executable by the processor to: (a) cause the display device to visually distinguish a plurality of the locations on the reels from a plurality of the other locations on the reels; and (b) cause each one of the symbols displayed at each one of the visually distinguished locations to have the assigned characteristic.

Claim 57 (new): The gaming device of Claim 54, wherein the gaming device has a data storage device which stores at least one instruction, the instruction being executable by the processor to communicate with a server over a network, the server storing data associated with the game.

Claim 58 (new): A gaming device comprising:

a plurality of reels, each one of the reels providing a plurality of locations for a plurality of symbols, the symbols being arrangable into a plurality of combinations including at least one winning combination and at least one non-winning combination;

a winning outcome associated with the winning combination;

a non-winning outcome associated with the non-winning combination; and

a processor programmed to:

(a) cause at least one of the locations on the reels to be visually distinguished from the other locations on the reels,

(b) randomly determine one of the combinations of symbols,

(c) cause the determined combination to be displayed on the reels, one of the symbols in the determined combination being positioned at the visually distinguished location;

(d) if the determined combination is a winning combination, provide the winning outcome;

(e) if the determined combination is a non-winning combination, determine whether the symbol at the visually distinguished location is of a first type or a second type;

(f) if the symbol at the visually distinguished location is of the first type, provide the non-winning outcome,

(g) if the symbol at the visually distinguished location is of the second type:

(i) treat said symbol as wild,

(ii) determine whether the winning combination occurs based on the wild treatment of said symbol,

(iii) provide the winning outcome if the winning combination occurs, and

(iv) provide the non-winning outcome if the winning combination does not occur.

Claim 59 (new): The gaming device of Claim 58, wherein: (a) the first type includes a first symbol characteristic; and (b) the second type includes a second symbol characteristic which is different from the first symbol characteristic.

Claim 60 (new): The gaming device of Claim 59, wherein the first symbol characteristic includes a characteristic selected from the group consisting of meaning, information, concept, shape, size, form and color.

Claim 61 (new): The gaming device of Claim 60, wherein the second symbol characteristic includes a characteristic selected from the group consisting of meaning, information, concept, shape, size, form and color.

Claim 62 (new): A gaming device comprising:

a plurality of reels, each one of the reels providing a plurality of locations for a plurality of symbols, the symbols being arrangable into a plurality of combinations including at least one winning combination and at least one non-winning combination;

a winning outcome associated with the winning combination;

a non-winning outcome associated with the non-winning combination; and

a processor programmed to:

(a) randomly determine one of the combinations of symbols,

(b) if the determined combination is a winning combination, provide the winning outcome;

(c) if the determined combination is a non-winning combination, determine whether one of the symbols in said determined combination is of a first type or a second type;

(d) if said symbol is of the first type, provide the non-winning outcome, and

(e) if said symbol is of the second type:

(i) treat said symbol as wild,

(ii) determine whether the winning combination occurs based on the wild treatment of said symbol,

(iii) provide the winning outcome if the winning combination occurs, and

(iv) provide the non-winning outcome if the winning combination does not occur.

Claim 63 (new): The gaming device of Claim 62, wherein: (a) the first type includes a first symbol characteristic; and (b) the second type includes a second symbol characteristic which is different from the first symbol characteristic.

Claim 64 (new): The gaming device of Claim 63, wherein the first symbol characteristic includes a characteristic selected from the group consisting of meaning, information, concept, shape, size, form and color.

Claim 65 (new): The gaming device of Claim 64, wherein the second symbol characteristic includes a characteristic selected from the group consisting of meaning, information, concept, shape, size, form and color.